



The President's Daily Brief

May 1, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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VIETNAM

The communists have appealed to former government troops in Saigon to turn in their weapons and have encouraged civil servants to stay at their jobs. At the same time, the communists have warned that looters found in possession of "state property" will be shot, and they have imposed a six-to-six nighttime curfew.

Intercepted communist messages indicate that South Vietnamese troops offered little last-minute resistance following the official surrender announcement yesterday. Large numbers of government soldiers waved white flags, and officers were waiting at the entrances to military compounds for the arrival of the North Vietnamese. There were also references in the messages to government personnel throwing down their weapons and removing their uniforms.

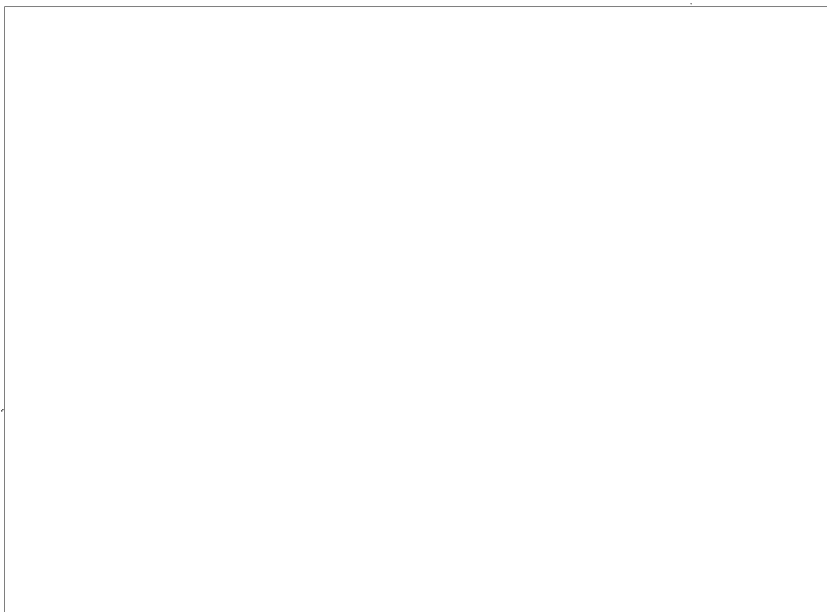


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SYRIA-ISRAEL



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TURKEY-GREECE

The Turkish government has reportedly decided that, in view of the potential for a confrontation with Greece at some time, Turkey's basic objectives should be:

--restoration of US military aid,

--stabilization of Turkey's internal political and economic situation, and

--agreement with Greece on a bi-regional system for Cyprus that would stabilize the Turkish Cypriot sector.

The Turkish government apparently has concluded that the military buildup on the Greek islands does not constitute a serious threat. The Turks see the buildup as preparation for eventual declaration of a 12-mile limit around the Aegean islands, protection of the Greek claim to mineral rights on the continental shelf, and possibly a contingency move for the support of Greek Cypriots in the event of further Turkish military action on Cyprus.

Turkey so far seems to have had fewer problems in coping with the US aid cutoff than it had anticipated.

[redacted] that it was relatively easy to obtain spare parts for naval equipment from third countries, but that Turkey had to pay almost twice as much for them as it had paid the US. The admiral said that if aid should be restored before the end of June, Ankara probably would not retaliate against US facilities.

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The problem of obtaining spare parts may ease further. NATO representatives of Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany, and the United Kingdom have tentatively expressed willingness to provide them.

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Greece is augmenting its armed forces by calling up reserves and increasing its draft call. [redacted]

[redacted] that the armed forces are to be increased by 22,000, bringing Greek military strength by mid-May to about 180,000. The additional men will be used to fill out mainland forces whose numbers have been reduced by the transfer of personnel to the islands. We estimate that some 16,000 troops have been sent to eastern Aegean islands since last summer.

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LAOS

The Lao communists are rolling out the red carpet for King Savang, who is making an unprecedented week-long official visit to Sam Neua and other areas in the communist-controlled zone. The King's 22-member party includes the Queen, other members of the royal family, and a number of senior officials of the coalition government.

The most important figures in the Lao communist movement, including shadowy Central Committee chairman Kaysone Phomvihane and his deputy, Nouhak Phoumsavan, were on hand to greet the King on his arrival in Sam Neua on Monday.

Prince Souphanouvong, who invited the King to visit the area and who is in overall charge of festivities, delivered a welcoming address that was reported to be strongly nationalistic and conciliatory in tone. The speech apparently contained no polemical tirades against non-communist Lao politicians and military leaders. The communists are giving widespread and highly favorable coverage to the King's visit in their propaganda broadcasts.

The opening phase of the royal visit suggests that both the King and his hosts are trying to make this occasion a significant step toward national reconciliation. While it is still too early to tell if the visit will have any impact on the festering situation at Sala Phou Khoun, no significant military action has been reported there since Monday afternoon.

The major beneficiary of the King's visit will almost certainly be Souphanouvong. By closely identifying himself with the King, Souphanouvong stands to strengthen his credentials as a Lao nationalist and his claim to be Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's logical successor.

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NOTES

The Spanish government, although relieved by the strong showing of the Portuguese moderates, remains suspicious of Lisbon's policies. Madrid probably will not be much influenced by the Portuguese election results as far as Spain's domestic situation is concerned.

Political commentators and opposition politicians in Spain are arguing, however, that if "underdeveloped Portugal" can have a non-violent, honest election that resulted in a non-extremist majority, then no one should fear free elections in Spain. A high Spanish Foreign Ministry official told a US embassy officer that the election outcome would permit consideration of a number of Spanish-Portuguese issues that had been held up pending the election. He even thought a meeting of the two foreign ministers might be held in June.

* * *

The USSR gave the Palestine Liberation Organization delegation headed by Yasir Arafat a cool welcome on Monday.

Arafat's arrival was not preceded by a press buildup, and he was greeted by lower ranking officials than on his previous visit last November. The Soviet attitude toward Palestinian representation at the Geneva peace conference, in fact, may be at the root of Moscow's current troubles with the Arabs.

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The Soviets apparently would be willing to put off discussion of the Palestinian representation question until after the conference begins.

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